Marahmat Department.—The expenditure incurred by the Marahmat Agencies was Rs. 3,94,998 and was distributed as follows:—

Communications	....	Rs.	17,915.
Buildings	....	,,	2,54,459.
Irrigation	....	,,	12,075.
Miscellaneous	....	,,	82,741.
Establishment	....	,,	27,808.

Under the head of "Communications" undertaken by the Marahmat Department during the year, the construction of the Perumala-Kandala road in the Cardamom District may be mentioned as the most important work.

The construction of the satroms at Suchindram and Police buildings at Oodumpanshola and Munaar are some of the important works under the head of "Buildings" which were in progress or completed during the year. The conversion of the old Taluk Cutcherry building at Ettumanur into a satrom was also sanctioned in the year.

Under the head "Miscellaneous" the following are some of the large works undertaken by the Marahmat Department:—

The restoration of the Teppakolem tanks at Padmanabhapuram, Parakkay and Tirupadisaram, the draining and cleaning of the Sreevarahom tank at the Capital and the Mullakkal tank at Alleppey and the improvement of the tank at Kadinankulam.

The completion of certain wells in the Southern Division partially sunk by private individuals and the construction of some new ones were also taken in hand by the Department.

Travancore Branch, S. I. Railway.—The Railway line from Shencottah to Punalore was opened on the 26th November 1904. Through communication was thus established between Tinnevelly and Quilon, affording greater facilities for traffic. The guaranteed interest paid by the State during the year amounted to Bh. Rs. 2,78,157–10–1, the rate of interest being $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

16. **Anchal.**—The number of Anchal offices remained the same as in the previous year *viz.* 150, while that of letter boxes rose from 179 to 185. Nearly 55 lakhs of covers, official and private, passed through the Anchal offices during the year. It is satisfactory to note that the Anchal Hundi system is becoming more and more popular, nearly 73,000 hundis having been issued during the year. To afford additional facilities to the public the postage on parcels was reduced from 4 to 3 chuckrams for the first 20 tolas and 2 chuckrams for every additional 20 tolas.

17. **Devaswoms.**—The management of the Devaswom Department which is one of the most important departments in the State and on which between 6 and 7 lakhs of rupees are annually spent was one of the subjects that received considerable attention during the year under report. Two measures of importance were adopted by Government which are calculated to remove the existing abuses and place the management of these ancient institutions on a satisfactory footing. You will doubtless have noticed from the several proceedings of Government recently published in the Gazette how complicated the question of purificatory ceremonies in temples has become, whether viewed from the standpoint of public finances or of private rights. Various issues have been raised, particularly

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in reference to the summary procedure adopted in levying the cost of the ceremonies from the parties who may be thought to be liable. Government being convinced of the necessity for having these questions investigated and a set of clear rules laid down as to what constitutes pollution and what are the ceremonies necessary for purification and what scale of expenditure should be adopted for such ceremonies, have appointed Mr. A. Ramier, Assistant Peishkar, to conduct the necessary enquiry. He has been directed to consult the Tantries and Santies qualified to give an opinion on the subject and record their opinions with the authorities on which they are based, to verify their statements by reference to temple and other records and also ascertain the practice prevailing in the different temples and to submit a report on the whole question. The preliminary data are being collected and the regular investigation will soon be started.

The other measure adopted refers to the question of Padivus or scale of expenditure for the daily and extraordinary and periodical services and ceremonies in temples—a matter in which the responsibility of the State is even greater and more direct. The present scale is based upon the rates and details fixed nearly a century ago. The quantities were fixed for each article as well as the prices. No revision of rates or quantities has been made during the 100 years that have elapsed since they were fixed and the result is that owing to the steady rise in prices it is not possible to supply the actual quantities fixed in the scale but the fiction of their being so supplied is kept up by false entries in the accounts, the only concern of the authorities being to see that the total allotment is not exceeded. No check or control worth the name is exercised in respect of this expenditure and what is more there is no record ready to hand for reference when a question arises as to what the sanctioned scale is for any particular institution. That this system gives rise to abuses and malpractices is well-known and the Government have always felt the necessity for putting things in order. If we go back to the history of these institutions and the circumstances which led to the assumption of the temples by the State it will be found that a grave responsibility rests on the Government in this matter. It will not be denied that there have been considerable variations in the circumstances of the institutions during the past 100 years. Before any action can be taken it is necessary to ascertain exactly what the details of the old padivu are, and the work of investigation and compilation has been entrusted to Mr. Chempakaraman Pillai, Melalutu Pillai in the Huzur Jamabundy Department. After this work is completed it will be possible to find out how far the old scale is suited to the present time, what modifications may be made in the best interests of the institutions and how the financial side of the question is to be dealt with.

While these reforms are calculated to secure more effectual financial control and consequent economy in the management of these institutions they will be attended also with the different ceremonies and services being performed in greater conformity with Sastras and the Tantras prescribed for each institution.

In the carrying out of these important measures, Government fully rely upon the hearty co-operation of the Tantries who are gentlemen of much learning and culture.

Another measure of importance was the provision made during the year for the more efficient management of the important and richly endowed temples at Vaikom and Oodayanapuram. Fraud and peculation and false accounts were the inevitable evils of getting these institutions managed by low-paid servants without proper supervision and check. A better system of management has been introduced. Government trust that the arrangements now

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made will lead to the property of these temples being better conserved and the prescribed services more satisfactorily attended to.

18. **Separate Revenue.**—An important measure in connection with the Piravagay or Separate Revenue Department which had been long under the consideration of the Government was adopted during the year. The Piravagay Department which used to administer the revenue under Salt, Abkari, Customs, Tobacco, Opium and Ganja, Marine, Arms and Ammunition amounting to more than 45 per cent of the total revenue of the State, was re-organized and placed on a more satisfactory footing. The Dewan Peishkars in addition to their various other duties had to supervise not only the collection of the revenue of this Department but also the administration of the rules and regulations framed for the protection of such revenue. With a view to afford relief to the Peishkars and for the proper future administration of these important items of revenue under a uniform and definite policy in the interests of both the Government and the general public, His Highness the Maha Rajah was pleased to sanction the organization of a separate Excise Department, working under the control of a special officer styled the "Excise Commissioner".

The functions of this Department are the supervision of the tobacco, customs, and salt offices and distilleries and the prevention of smuggling of salt, opium, ganja, tobacco and arrack and illicit tapping for toddy and arrack, distillation of arrack and unauthorised growth of the ganja and tobacco plants; the examination of tobacco, salt, opium and arrack shops and generally to develop, collect and protect the items of revenue above referred to and to administer the rules and regulations framed for the collection and protection of such revenue.

The practical working of the new Department belongs to the current year. One notable change made in regard to the administration of one of the items of revenue of this Department, *viz.* opium and ganja, was the introduction of the Excise system. Under this system this item is expected to yield an additional revenue of Rs. 45,000. The excise system in regard to Abkari is already in force in the two Southern Divisions, and when the present Abkari contract expires in the two Northern Divisions, it will be introduced in those Divisions also.

Salt.—The total quantity of home-made, Bombay and Tinnevelly salt available for issue was 11,30,931 maunds. The sales were 7,83,547 maunds as against 7,49,142 maunds in 1079. Though there was an increase in the sales to the extent of 34,405 maunds the revenue amounted to only Rs. 17,90,062 or Rs. 1,37,775 less than in the previous year owing to the reduction in the selling price from Rs. 2½ to Rs. 2 per maund during the latter part of the year.

Home-made salt.—Besides the existing Allams *viz.* those at Tamarakulam, Rajakkamangalam and Variyoor, the old Colachel Allam which was resuscitated was also worked during the year. The total out-turn from all the above Allams was 1,78,461 maunds.

Customs.—During the year export duty on prepared palmyra fibre was reduced from 2½ to 1 per cent and the tariff value thereon from Rs. 15 to Rs. 12½ per cwt.

19. **Sanitation.** During the past year, the number of births registered was 58,657 and that of deaths 42,243. 1,55,655 persons were vaccinated during the year, of whom over 13,000 were infants.

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